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ABSTRACT

The relationship between ego and intimacy statuses was identified for 88 college students, 44 men and 44 women, and subsequently related to each other and to measures of intimacy, loving and liking. Results indicated that: (1) more advanced stages of identity development were associated with higher levels of intimacy formation; and (2) for both males and females, occupational identity development was the primary predictive factor in the identity/intimacy stage resolution relationship. (Author)

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Erikson Stage Resolution:

The Relationship Between Identity and Intimacy

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Erikson Stage Resolution: The Relationship Between
Identity and Intimacy

Marcia (1966) has operationalized Erikson's (1968) ego identity formation into four identity statuses or modes of resolution: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and identity diffusion. Degree of crisis and commitment are used to categorize an individual in a particular identity status. "Crisis refers to the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives: commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits" (Marcia, 1966, p. 551). According to these criteria, identity achievement individuals have gone through a period of crisis and have made commitments to an occupation and ideology (religion and politics) based on their own evaluations. Moratorium individuals are currently undergoing a period of crisis and are in the process of making formal commitments and values. Individuals in the foreclosure status have encountered no crisis but have adopted parental commitments and values. Identity diffusion individuals have made no commitments and are not experiencing crisis. With age, one gains a greater sense of ego identity by progressing developmentally along a continuum from identity diffusion to identity achievement.

After adolescents achieve an identity, they face another stage resolution--intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1968). Intimacy is defined by Erikson as "a fusing of identities . . ." (1968, p. 135). It is "the capacity to commit (oneself) to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such

commitments even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (Erikson, 1963, p. 263). If intimacy stage resolution is not achieved, impersonal or superficial interpersonal relationships are believed to be formed. Erikson contends such an individual is fearful that a fusion of his identity with that of another will result in loss of identity, even with close peer affiliations.

Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser (1973) have operationalized the intimacy crisis into five outcomes: intimate, preintimate, stereotyped, pseudointimate, and isolate relationship styles. According to Orlofsky et. al. (1973) intimate individuals establish and maintain deep and enduring love relationships. In comparison, the preintimate maintains an ambivalent posture about commitment and offers love without obligations and ties. Stereotype relationships are superficial and tend to be predominately with friends of the same sex (but not necessarily so). The pseudointimate, who appears to be maintaining a permanent-like attachment within a heterosexual relationship shows few signs of closeness or depth. Finally, the isolate is withdrawn from social relations, lacks personal relationships, and only occasionally maintains casual interpersonal contacts. Orlofsky (1976) has recently offered additional validation for the five interpersonal styles of intimacy, indicating that the intimate and preintimate are more perceptive of their partner's needs and more open and sensitive with their friends than the remaining intimacy styles.

Further research by Orlofsky and associates (1973) suggest a

a relationship between identity and intimacy. Orlofsky et. al. found, in their sample of 53 junior and senior college male students, identity achievement and moratorium individuals were significantly higher in their intimacy status than foreclosure and identity diffusion subjects. Similar findings also using a male sample have been reported by Marcia (1976). Collectively, these data offer support for the theoretical proposition, originally advanced by Erikson, that identity stage resolution may be an important prerequisite to committed and intimate relationships in young adulthood. But these data are limited to male samples only and it is unclear whether the relationship between identity and intimacy would hold for both genders.

While research with male subjects support Erikson's proposed theoretical relationship between identity and intimacy, previous studies have utilized an undifferentiated global measure of identity status. However, individual identity resolutions can be derived for the dimensions of occupation, religion and politics (Marcia, 1966). Therefore, it is unclear which identity achievement status dimension is most predictive of intimacy formation.

Hence, an investigation was completed to test the following two hypotheses. First, it was hypothesized that for both males and females advanced ego-identity status would be associated with more advanced intimacy development. Second, while previous research has demonstrated a relationship between a global measure of ego-identity status and intimacy development, it is unclear whether this association is due primarily to occupational, religious or political identity resolutions.

Previous research (Constantinople, 1969; Douvan & Kaye, 1962; Josselson, 1973; LaVoie, 1976; Toder & Marcia, 1973) suggest that female's in comparison to male's identity formation may be less dependent upon occupational and more upon affiliative factors (such as religion). To quote LaVoie (1976) "Vocational identity seems to play a more central role in identity formation in males...whereas identity formation is more closely aligned with affiliation in females" (p. 374). Therefore, it was hypothesized that occupational and political identity resolution, as male dominated arenas of life, would be more predictive of intimacy development for males than females; while religious identity, as an affiliative, nurturant and expressive life dimension, would be more predictive of intimacy development for females than males.

Methods

Subjects

Eighty-eight (88) junior and senior college students, 44 males and 44 females, were obtained as volunteer subjects from two housing facilities for men and women at Utah State University and from classes offered in the Departments of Family and Human Development and Sociology. Each subject was approached individually and solicited for participation. A 97% agreement to participate was achieved. Subjects came from a wide range of academic disciplines, were predominantly caucasian, and ranged in age from 19 to 25 years old.

Procedure

Individual interviews were completed in the privacy of each subject's residence or in a research laboratory located in the Department of Family and Human Development. Ego-identity status was assessed through Marcia's Identity Status Interview and the Ego-Identity Incomplete Sentence Blank (EI-ISB) (Marcia, 1966). Intimacy was measured through the Orlofsky Intimacy Interview (1976), Yufit's Intimacy Scale (1956), and Rubin's Loving and Liking Scales (1970).

Instruments

Identity status measure. Marcia's (1966) 15-30 minute semi-structured interview was used to determine the subject's identity status. The questions pertain to crisis and commitment in three areas: occupation, religion and politics. Marcia's scoring manual was used to evaluate each of the three areas. The Ego-Identity Incomplete Sentence Blank (EI-ISB) scale consists of twenty-three incomplete sentence items which require the subject to complete each sentence "expressing his real feelings." Each response was rated on a 1-3 scale and summated to provide an overall measure of identity achievement.

Intimacy status measures. Orlofsky's (1976) Intimacy Interview is a 20-30 minute semistructured interview which assesses intimacy status. This interview evaluates (1) "the presence or absence of close relationships with peers; (2) the presence of commitment to an enduring heterosexual love relationship; and (3) depth versus superficiality of relationship" (Orlofsky, 1976, p. 76). Intimacy

ratings were scored using the Orlofsky et. al. (1973) rating manual. Each subject was assigned, based on depth of relationships and heterosexual commitment criteria into either an Intimate, Stereotyped, Isolate, Pseudointimate, or Preintimate status. Isolates were categorized using the first criterion--presence or absence of close relationships. As summarized in Figure 1, the non-isolate statuses were differentiated on the second and third criteria of commitment and depth. While each interview can be scored for relationships with male and female friends, the present investigation used the combined intimacy status rating. Any discrepancies between the male and female relationship information were compromised by the use of the general "tone" of the full interview as described by Orlofsky (1976, p. 78).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Yufit's (1956) Intimacy Isolation questionnaire was previously used by Orlofsky et al. (1973). While these researchers used both the isolation and intimacy scales, only the 20 intimacy scale items were utilized in this study. Given the limited available information on reliability and validity of the Yufit's scale, the primary reason for inclusion was to provide some convergent validity (on face validity grounds) for the Orlofsky Intimacy Interview.

Rubin's (1970) Love and Liking Scales consists of several summated Likert scale items. The purpose of the love scale was to score a summed measure of three components of love: attachment (a

need or desire to be in the other person's presence); caring (a concern for the other's happiness and welfare); and intimacy (self-disclosure) with respect to one's dating partner. Subjects were asked to respond to these instruments using as their target person the most significant person of the opposite sex in their peer group. Once again, this assessment allowed for an added measure of depth in interpersonal relations.

In some of our own previous research we have demonstrated that intimacy development is associated with both the loving and liking scales as indices of interpersonal depth in heterosexual relations (LaVoie & Adams, in press). Hence, these scales offer an added validity check on the primary measure of intimacy development--the Orlofsky Intimacy Interview.

Results

Interrater Reliability

While one individual blindly rated all 88 interview protocols, a random sample of 15% of these protocols were rated independently by two blind raters. On the Orlofsky Intimacy Interview (1976) an 82% agreement rate was obtained on the five intimacy stage categorizations. The Marcia (1966) Ego-Identity Status interrater reliability reached a 100% rate of agreement on the overall placement of students into one of four identity statuses. Percentage of agreement on the subscales of occupational, religious and political ego-identity ranged from 73% to 100%, with a mean interrater agreement of 91%. A correlation between the two independent ratings on the Marcia Ego-

Identity Incomplete Sentence Blank scores, reached an acceptable level of significance, $r = .86$, $p < .001$.

Intimacy Measures

Interclass correlations of the Yufit's and Rubin measures of intimacy provide some evidence that these measures are collectively assessing certain individual dimensions of interpersonal involvement. As would be expected the Yufit intimacy scale correlated positively with the Rubin love, $r = .20$, $p < .04$, but not liking scale, $r = .08$, ns. Intimacy and love are conceptually more closely attached theoretically and practically than intimacy and liking, and the correlational data supported this conceptual assumption.

Further, three one-way analysis of variance calculations were completed on the five intimacy stages for the related interpersonal involvement measures of intimacy (Yufit), love and liking (Rubin). No significant difference was observed on the Yufit measure, but the means were in the expected direction with low intimacy categories showing lower mean intimacy scores than high intimacy categories, $F(4,83) = 1.0$ ns. For both the Rubin loving, $F(4,83) = 8.10$, $p < .001$, and liking scales, $F(4,83) = 3.20$, $p < .02$, significant associations with intimacy stages were found. On both measures (according to simple effects Scheffe tests) isolated individuals scored significantly lower than preintimate and intimate persons. The remaining two groups (Pseudointimate and stereotyped) did not, however, significantly differ from the former groups and fell in between the isolated and preintimate and intimate persons.

Collectively these data offer predictive validity to the Orlofsky intimacy status categories.

Identity and Intimacy

To test the two hypotheses, gender and identity statuses were treated as independent variables and the Orlofsky intimacy interview classifications, the Yufit intimacy scale, the Marcia ego-identity incomplete sentence blank and the Rubin loving and liking scales were treated as multiple dependent measures. Total scale scores were used on the Yufit, Marcia, and Rubin scales. On the Orlofsky Intimacy Interview the isolate category was assigned a value of 1, pseudointimate and stereotyped a value of 2, preintimate 3 and intimate 4. Four multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were performed on the identity status classifications related to overall, occupational, religious and political subscale dimensions. These analyses allowed the researchers to examine both the overall identity subscale status/intimacy relationships as well as the sex x subscale identity status associated with intimacy development. The overall multivariate analysis of variance was assessed through the approximate chi square technique and individual F ratios were utilized on the analyses for each dependent measure. These data are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

The first hypothesis that for both males and females advanced ego-identity status would be associated with higher intimacy formation was supported by the data on the overall identity status measure which

collapses over occupational, religious and political identity status dimensions ($\chi^2 = 80.78$, $p < .001$). On the primary measure of intimacy formation (OII) the identity achievement students ($M=3.25$, $sd = .25$, $n=23$) were significantly more advanced than the diffusion ($M=2.33$, $sd = .23$, $n = 27$) and moratorium ($M = 2.54$, $sd = .24$, $n = 2$) students. foreclosure ($M=2.36$, $sd=.32$, $n = 24$) students. Further, on the incomplete sentence blank measure of identity development (ISB) the identity achievement status ($M=39.58$, $sd = .54$) students were the most advanced in their identity development, diffusion status students ($M=32.14$, $sd = .50$) the least developed with foreclosure ($M=37.50$, $sd=.69$) and moratorium ($M=36.58$, $sd=.53$) status students falling in between the two former groups. (The same relationship was observed on the occupation, religion and political status dimensions on the relationship between Ego-Identity Status Interview and the ISB. Further, the significant Sex x Identity status interactions on the ISB dependent measure for the overall, religious and political identity status subscales merely reflected a wider degree of variance between the diffusion and identity achievement males versus females. However, in all three significant interactions for both sexes comparisons between identity statuses within sex were in the theoretically expected direction with identity achievement subjects scoring higher on the ISB than diffusion subjects.) No significant relationships were observed between overall identity status and the remaining measures of intimacy.

While the second hypothesis predicted sex differences in the identity status and intimacy development relationship, no support was found for these predictions. Rather, regardless of sex, occupational identity was found to be the only significant predictor of intimacy formation.

Identity achievement ($M=2.95$, $sd = .21$, $n = 34$) and moratorium ($M=2.90$, $sd = .24$, $n=26$) students on the dimension of occupational choice held higher average intimacy scores on the OII than diffusion ($M = 2.02$, $sd = .29$, $n = 17$) and foreclosure ($M=2.10$, $sd=.36$, $n=11$) status peers.

While the MANOVA on the Sex X Identity status interaction only approached significance ($\chi^2 = 21.83$, $p < .10$) on the political subscale, a significant interaction was noted on the Yufit intimacy scale. Although this finding may be spurious, these data suggest identity achievement status males maybe more intimate than moratorium males, while the reverse may be true for females. The authors suggest extreme caution in making any generalization from these findings however given the MANOVA did not reach an acceptable level of significance and may reflect a Type I statistical error.

Discussion

The theoretical assumption emerging from Erikson's theory of psychosocial development that positive identity stage resolution is an important prerequisite to adult intimacy was supported by the data in this investigation. Identity achievement status males and females were observed to have more deep and committed intimate relationships than the remaining identity status groups. While our data clearly support the previous findings of Orlofsky et al. (1973) and Marcia (1976) using male samples, the findings of this study also extend the identity stage resolution/intimacy development relationship to a female sample.

It has been unclear whether occupational or ideological identity stage resolution accounts for the identity-intimacy relationship. Previous research has only reported on the combined or total identity status subscale and ignored the occupation, religion and political subscales. A gender specific hypothesis was advanced in this investigation that proposed religious identity stage resolution would be more predictive of intimacy formation for females while occupational and political identity achievement would be more predictive of intimacy development for males. Contrary to expectations, religious and political identity resolutions were unassociated with intimacy development. Rather, for both males and females, moving towards or obtaining identity achievement resolution on occupational choice were predictive of advanced intimacy status levels. Diffusion or foreclosure males and females in their state of role confusion or commitment without exploration may search for and be satisfied with less from their personal relationships than their moratorium or identity achievement peers. Or it could be that experiencing or having experienced crisis and finding a self-satisfying occupational commitment may free the moratorium and identity achievement status persons to redirect themselves to an equally important search for deep and meaningful interpersonal commitments.

While previous research has suggested that affiliative factors are more central for females' (e.g., Josselson, 1973; Toder & Marcia, 1973) and vocational factors for males' (e.g., LaVoie, 1976) identity formation, these data suggest occupational identity stage resolution is the primary variable in the identity and intimacy stage resolution

relationship. Both women and men who experience a self-imposed period of occupational exploration prior to commitment are more likely than their peers who are in role confusion or commitments without exploration to develop more mature and deep interpersonal commitments. Hence, the current social movement by women's groups calling for equity in vocational choice, training, and opportunities may be, through their impact on occupational awareness and exploration experiences for women, influencing both women's ego-identity and interpersonal relationships.

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TABLE 1: Relationship Between Sex of Subject, Identity Status and Degree of Intimacy

		Ego-Identity Status Subscale											
Source of Variance	Dependent Variable	Overall Status			Occupation			Religion			Politics		
		X ²	F	P	X ²	F	P	X ²	F	P	X ²	F	P
Sex	OII	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	ISB	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	YIS	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	LOVE	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	LIKING	1.03	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
Multivariate Test		8.59			8.77			5.12			3.56		
Degrees of Freedom		5			5			5			5		
Identity status	OII	2.91	04		3.36	02		<1.0	ns		1.36	ns	
	ISB	36.15	001		7.43	001		12.79	001		6.13	001	
	YIS	1.06	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		2.02	ns	
	LOVE	1.24	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	LIKING	1.53	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
Multivariate Test		80.78*			31.71*			32.94*			28.64*		
Degrees of Freedom		15			15			15			15		
Sex X Identity	OII	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		2.51	ns	
	ISB	3.46	02		<1.0	ns		4.50	01		3.04	03	
	YIS	<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns		3.05	03	
	LOVE	2.26	ns		1.74	ns		<1.0	ns		<1.0	ns	
	LIKING	2.58	ns		2.39	ns		<1.0	ns		1.82	ns	
Multivariate Test		21.38			13.24			15.58			21.83		
Degrees of Freedom		15			15			15			15		

Note: Abbreviations include Orlofsky Intimacy Interview (OII), Ego-Identity Incomplete Sentence Blank (ISB), Yufits Intimacy Scale Items (YIS), Rubin's Love (LOVE) and Liking (LIKING) Scales.